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SUBJECT: ANOTHER POSTPONEMENT OF PHILIPPINE-MNLF-OIC
TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE

REF: MANILA 1011

1. (SBU) Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Winlove Dumayas on July 6 approved "with conditions" Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) Chairman Nur Misuari's request for a temporary leave of detention to attend a long-awaited tripartite conference among the MNLF, Philippine government, and the Organization of Islamic Conference in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia July 17-19. Judge Dumayas nonetheless mandated that a Philippine National Police/Special Action Force security detail accompany Misuari, and requested a "sovereign guarantee" from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia assuring compliance with the court order.

2. (SBU) However, according to MNLF Islamic Command Council Chairman Habib Mujahab Hashim, a postponement of the Tripartite Conference was now likely, at least until September, as the Saudi government determined how to respond to the question of a guarantee. There is also some speculation that the Philippine government preferred to move the venue to Manila. This is the sixth or seventh postponement of this conference in recent years.

3. (SBU) Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs for Special Concerns Rafael Seguis told the media on July 10 that the delay stemmed from a scheduling conflict involving Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda.

4. (SBU) Nur Misuari wrote to the Ambassador on July 1 requesting to send a seven-person delegation to "touch base with your good office as it is our mutual thrust to look into the well-being of the Bangsamoro People" in advance of the tripartite conference. His staff subsequently clarified that the purpose was to discuss the Mindanao peace process generally, including the U.S. role in Mindanao more specifically. Embassy is now attempting to set up this meeting for DCM and political officers.

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